

BAPTIST CHURCH MEMBERS ON AMERICAN IDOL

Updated May 24, 2003 (first published May 21, 2003) (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

An item in the Baptist Press for May 15 reminded me of how worldly many Baptist churches in America have become. The two finalists for the raunchy “American Idol” television program are Baptist church members. Clay Aiken is a member of Leesville Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, which is aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention. Ruben Studdard is a member of Rising Star Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. The contest has been running for weeks, airing on Tuesday and Wednesday nights. On Tuesdays the contestants perform and toll free phone lines are open for two hours for the voting. On Wednesdays, the performer who received the least number of votes is eliminated.

Studdard eventually won the contest.

American Idol features a group of contestants who compete to win a prize of a lucrative recording contract. I have not seen the program but I have seen advertisements for it, and the music and dancing and dress are immodest and worldly.

One of the songs that Studdard sang was John Lennon’s “Imagine.” Consider the lyrics of this wicked song: “Imagine there’s no heaven, it’s easy if you try/ No hell below us, above only sky ... You may say that I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one/ And some day I hope you’ll join us/ And the world will be as one.”

That church members and professing Christians could participate in something like this without being disciplined is a disgrace to the name of our holy Lord Jesus Christ and is incontrovertible evidence of apostasy.

Instead of disciplining Aiken, his church has exalted him with a special page on its web site. An article in the *Biblical Recorder* for April 17 said that Leesville Baptist church members have been gathering together to watch *American Idol* after their Bible study on Wednesday nights. (The *Biblical Recorder* is the voice of the Southern Baptists in North Carolina.) Roger Shuford, the church’s pastor, said members usually gather in the church fellowship hall or at the home of Aiken’s mother, Faye Parker, on Wednesday’s to see if Aiken made it through to the next round. He said, “Everybody watches on Tuesday night.” The pastor did not give even a hint of warning about the worldliness of American Idol. He had nothing but praise for Aiken: “It’s amazing to watch him,” Shuford said. “He’s an awesome young man.” The *Biblical Recorder* itself gave no warning about this worldly confusion.

Not to be outdone, Studdard's church had a "Go Ruben" party on Wednesday evening, May 21, the night the winner was chosen. The next day, Brian Snider had a phone conversation with Charles Garfield, one of the trustees at Rising Star Baptist Church. Garfield said the church is very proud of Ruben and that they don't have any objections with the entertainment industry. He said Ruben was fulfilling his lifelong dream of "bringing people together." When Brother Snider asked Garfield about Ruben singing the atheist anthem, "Imagine," he said that the key word in that song is "imagine" and that "it's what is in your heart that is important." Brother Snider challenged him as to how a Christian could sing a song by an atheist in which he dreams of a world without God and pretends that there is no heaven or hell? Garfield replied, "My mother taught me to respect all people and all opinions. I can't think for another man." It is obvious that this church cares nothing about the truth of God's Word and is preaching a false gospel of tolerance and non-judgmentalism that it has borrowed from its close association with the world.

The representative of Studdard's church also told Brother Snider that Ruben is "not one of these rap singers" that uses "all this different language," referring to cursing and such. In fact, Studdard enjoys such rappers. An Associated Press article, "Ruben's Already Recording," for May 23, said that "one of Studdard's favorites" is rapper Fat Joe. I did a web search for Fat Joe lyrics, and many of them are filthy and violent. In fact, it would not be possible to publish even the titles to many of them.

After I published the first edition of this article on May 21, one reader wrote and said, "Ruben Studdard did make a special point of saying, 'to God be all the glory' for all his success and 'it is Him that decides whether he wins or loses' (loose quote)."

This statement exhibits a lack of spiritual discernment. For Studdard to use the phrase "to God be all the glory" in the context of performing such wicked songs in such an unholy setting is blasphemous. A holy God cannot be glorified by unholiness. It is easy to say the words "God" and "Jesus," but there are many false gods and false christs. In fact, most in America who name those names are referring to false ones. The Bible often warns God's people to beware of such things that we be not deceived (i.e., 2 Cor. 11:1-4).

The American music industry is lascivious and idolatrous. It is one of the most wicked influences in American society, and, in fact, has polluted most nations of the world by its international popularity. Not only should born again children of God have no part in such things, but we should rebuke them. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). Instead, the average Baptist church member is as deeply involved with these wicked aspects of society as his unsaved neighbor, loving the same raunchy rock music, enjoying the same degrading television programs, watching the same PG-13 and R-rated movies. And he is so controlled by the

unscriptural positive-only, tolerance philosophy that he cannot lift his voice against error and evil.

The Bible is very plain about what God thinks of these things:

“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17).

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?” (James 4:4-5).

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them” (Colossians 3:5-7).

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14).

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation” (1 Peter 1:14-15).

The breakdown in separation from the world is what destroyed Israel of old and it will destroy the power and purity of any church that ignores God's warnings.

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